4: Bowen C-5 (1950) 1951 MK2 Maritime Arabs MK2

point of vantage. Before every prayer the Arabs first perform the required Moslem ablutions of washing their hands, face, feet, etc., in sea water; then they go through the prayer ritual facing towards Mecca with their headcloth spread in front of them as a prayer rug. It is for determining the direction of Mecca that the compass on a large dhow is often most used! The first prayer is the dawn prayer said in the first greying light of dawn; the morning prayer takes place when the sun is close to the meridian; the afternoon prayer is called when the shadows begin to lengthen; the evening prayer is said shortly after the sun sets; finally, the night prayer ends the day several hours after sunset. The above applies to Moslem Persians and Indians as well as to the Arabs; obviously it does not apply to Hindus or sailors of other religions.

Eating is intimately related to Islamic religion for Arabs and other Moslem sailors, as their three meals come directly after the dawn, the morning, and the evening prayers. In the month of Ramadhan all faithful Moslems neither drink nor eat during the daylight hours; however, during Ramadhan all activities on land and on sea usually hit a low ebb. In other months breakfast consists for the Arabs of little more than a piece of unleavened bread with some sweet tea or water with which to wash it down. Lunch has more to offer, consisting of a mess of boiled rice with a flavoring of *ghee* (clarified butter) and curried or baked fish (if the ship has any fish aboard). The main portion of the meal is rice, which is served on a huge tray, or often simply on a palm leaf mat. The crew gathers around several of these trays or mats and makes quick work of the food, using no implements other than their right hand. They take a little fish (or meat if they are that fortunate), ball a small handful of rice around it and toss the ball deftly into their mouth, usually without losing a crumb. Nothing is ever wasted, as someone always scavenges the last morsel. Supper is essentially the same as lunch.

Often a feast is in order in port; this always calls for the slaughter of a sheep (or goat), a number of which are always kept alive on board. The sheep is usually slaughtered at dawn and is virtually dragged from its skin into a large iron pot, where it is boiled in water. The sheep or goat is the *pièce de résistance* and is served whole on a huge tray of rice. For a feast, a curry flavoring or raisins are often mixed with the rice. Various delicacies from the sheep, such as the heart, liver, lungs, and kidneys, are cooked separately and served in side dishes. As the feast starts, the sheep is methodically torn apart limb from limb and fiber by fiber. The meat is always eaten in the same manner: rice is balled around small bits of meat and tossed deftly into one's mouth with the right hand. In pulling